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## Background

1. The Latvian resistance movement in foreign countries is, like the Estonian one, divided into two large and often antagonistic groups, the Ulmanists and the Democrats. The division between the two camps dates back to the coup d'etat carried out on 15 May 1934 by President Karlis Ulmanis, at that time Prime Minister of Latvia, and General Balodis, his Commander-in-Chief. This coup was on the model of the Estonian one carried out on 12 March 1934 by President Pats and General Laidoner. Both coups, but especially the Latvian one, were motivated by fear of Soviet occupation after the advent of Hitler in Germany. This fact, however, is not known to the general public or even to the majority of high Latvian and Estonian officials; and the memory of the coup continues to divide the people, even in exile, into two camps.
2. In Latvian academic circles, as in Estonian ones, which are the bearers of political thought and leadership, the line of division coincides to a great extent with the historical but, to an onlooker, ridiculous line of division between the "color-wearing" academic fraternities, on one hand, and the "non-colored" academic societies, on the other. After the dissolution of all political parties in 1934 by Ulmanis-Balodis in Latvia and Pats-Laidoner in Estonia, the fraternities and societies were, on the whole, considered the two remaining large political opponents. It was assumed that the "colored" sponsored the authoritarian regime and that the "non-colored" represented the more democratically minded opposition. This division was arbitrary, but continues to exist in exile and explains to a great extent the variety of refugee organizations and papers, their mutual relations, personal attitudes, and the information circulated about each other.
3. In reality, both groups -- the Ulmanists and the Democrats, or the "colored" and the "non-colored" -- have the same aims: their proper establishment as displaced persons in foreign countries and the restoration of their freedom and independence.
4. Finally, between the Estonians and the Latvians, both at home and in exile, there is an important difference: While Estonia in 1938 succeeded in introducing by popular vote a new and democratic constitution, Latvia, because of

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more complicated home conditions, failed to do this when the Soviet assault in 1939 and the subsequent occupation in 1940 came. Latvian Democrats, as a result, have felt themselves to be "a nation without a constitution" since the 1934 coup of Ulmanis-Balodis. They refer, therefore, to the Constitution of 1922-1934, in accordance with which Bishop Rancans (pronounced "Rantsans"), at present a refugee in Germany, as former Deputy Speaker of the Latvian Parliament dissolved by Ulmanis-Balodis, is constitutionally the trustee of the rights and duties of the President of Latvia. The Ulmanists, on the other hand, point to the fact that President Ulmanis, before his deportation to the Soviet Union in 1940, succeeded in giving certain, but not quite clear, constitutional powers to Karlis Zarinh, Latvian Minister to London. In reality, it seems that these powers cover only the appointment of Latvian representatives in foreign countries.

#### Latvian Central Council

5. President Ulmanis, when entrusting Minister Zarinh at London in 1940 with certain exceptional powers, undoubtedly had in mind the creation of a Latvian independence and restoration movement in foreign countries. There were at that time, however, no Latvian refugees in foreign countries.
6. On the other hand, in 1943-44, during the German occupation of the Baltic States, four major Latvian political parties -- the Farmers, New Farmers (i.e., settlers as a result of the agrarian reform), Liberals or Democrats, and Social Democrats -- constituted underground a secret resistance center called the Latvian Central Council (ICP; Latvijas Centrālā Padome). When Germany collapsed in the Baltic, four leading members of the Latvian Central Council, among others, escaped to Germany (Klīve, Blodnieks, Kruka, Bastjans) and four others to Sweden (Bruno Kalnins, Čakste, Čielens, and Salnais). Salnais was Minister to Sweden. This group completed its membership mainly from parliamentary circles and is at present the most active Latvian political group in Western Europe. It has a center in Germany and another in Sweden, of which the group in Sweden, headed by Bruno Kalnins (Social Democrat), chiefly for reasons of communications, is the more active group. It recognizes the authority of Bishop Rancans but also works in close contact with Minister Zarinh in London and the successor to Dr. Alfred Bilmanis, late Latvian Minister to Washington. Before the death in 1948 of Salnais, his home was the headquarters of the group. After the death of Salnais, Valdemars Kreicbergs, former secretary of the Latvian Legation at Stockholm, became formally the successor to Minister Salnais; but, because of his work at the American Legation at Stockholm, Kreicbergs declared that he could consider himself chargé d'affaires ad interim only nominally and on condition that Mrs. Salnais, an intelligent woman, would carry on with the practical side of the work as before. The homes of Bruno Kalnins and Mrs. Salnais, therefore, remain the headquarters of the group in Sweden.
7. Bruno Kalnins, son of the late Dr. Paul Kalnins, Speaker of the Latvian Parliament, is the acknowledged leader and soul of the group. According to his friends and foes alike, he has "very much improved lately". The remark undoubtedly has reference to Bruno Kalnins' earlier extreme political radicalism. By the Ulmanists, he is reproached for having been in 1940 the chief political adviser or "politruk" of the Latvian Army during the "popular-democratic" period; but, according to reliable witnesses, Kalnins accepted the post at the request of Commander-in-Chief Gen. Balodis and after a corresponding decision of the Latvian Social Democratic Party Executive. In the face of obvious Soviet breach of promise and subsequent sovietization of Latvia, he resigned.
8. The Latvian Central Council at the present appears to consist of the following members (the list may be incomplete):
  - In Germany: Bishop Joseph Rancans, head of the group;
  - Kruka, Liberal, Secretary general of ICP, Esslingen, Germany;
  - Klīve, representing Old Farmers;
  - Blodnieks, New Farmer;
  - Bastjans, Social Democrat, former Minister of Finance;
  - Buks, Catholic, secondary school headmaster

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Among other things, this group is in close contact with Liepins at Esslingen, US Zone of Germany, former President of the Latvian Red Cross, Lord Mayor of Riga, and former Latvian Minister to Estonia.

In Sweden: Bruno Kalnins, Chairman of the group;  
Ex-Foreign Minister Cielens, Social Democrat;  
Janis Breiks, Liberal, lawyer, Member of Parliament, chairman of the Latvian Committee in Sweden;  
Justice Mintauts Oakste, Liberal;  
General Tepfers, Liberal;  
Grins, Liberal;  
Dr. Ogrins, Social Democrat;  
Mrs. Bruno Kalnins, Social Democrat;  
Prof. Telkmans, Agrarian;  
Asst. Prof. Veldis, Agrarian;  
Engineer Laimanis, Agrarian;  
Gardner Schalz, Agrarian;  
Kampars, former official of Latvian Liquor Monopoly;  
Bruks, Catholic;  
Rubnis, Catholic; ex-Member of Parliament;  
Mrs. Salnais.

9. Latvian Zinas, the semi-weekly unofficial mouthpiece of the LCP in Sweden, is edited by ex-Foreign Minister Cielens and Bruno Kalnins. It has an editorial council consisting of Oakste, Grins, Tepfers, and Schreibers (?), and a circulation of some 2,000 copies all over the world.
10. Latvian Vardas, also a semi-weekly, issued by Noren, Johansons, Turks, Osols, and Kroders (?), is the somewhat more conservative paper of the Ulmanists, or the "colored" group.

#### Central Council of Latvians

11. Because the initials of the Central Council of Latvians (LCP; Latviesu Centrala Padome) in Germany are identical with those of the Latvian Central Council (see above), the two groups are sometimes confused. But, while the Latvian Central Council is distinctly a political group, the Central Council of Latvians is a purely refugee relief organization. Both are represented in a third central organization, the Latvian National Council. The Central Council of Latvians is represented on this council by its executive, called the Latvian Central Committee (Latviesu Centrala Komiteja).

#### Latvian National Council

12. The Latvian National Council (LNP; Latviesu National Padome), Delmond (or Delmont) or Geislingen (?), US Zone of Germany, was founded on 12 July 1948 in Delmond in an attempt to unite all Latvian political and other groups in exile around the Latvian Central Council (Bishop Rancans), which itself is represented on the National Council by 12 delegates. The National Council is considered by many Latvians as the supreme parliamentary organization in exile; but other patriotic Latvians point to the extreme heterogeneity of its composition, consider it inefficient, and place the Latvian Central Council (Bishop Rancans) on top of all active Latvian refugee organizations. The National Council is headed by Zelms, former Minister of Public Education and Director of Public Education in the German-directed "self-government" of Latvia.

#### Latvian Committee

13. The Latvian Committee, Västmannagatan 13, Stockholm, is exclusively a refugee organization occupied with sending parcels, books, food, and other relief from Sweden to Latvian fellow-refugees in Germany and elsewhere. It is headed by Janis Breiks (see above) who is aided by Miss Kreicberg, sister of Valdemars Kreicbergs, American Embassy, Economic Section, Stockholm.

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Latvian National Fund

15. The Latvian National Fund, Stockholm, is a recent organization, on the model of the older Estonian National Fund, for the collection of money among Latvian refugees for propaganda, publication of works, and travel to important international Baltic gatherings. By October 1948, it had succeeded in collecting some 4,000 kr. from some 3,500 Latvian refugees in Sweden.

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